

Constantinople

In the name of Allah most gracious most Merciful.

Last Friday the Imam talked about causes of victory and causes of defeat. He talked about the 5-day war and the day known as the Set-Back. What is strange is that in days like those that victory can come to people who believe in Allah, people who the causes for victory are fulfilled within them. Therefore, Allah gave them victory.

Muslims waited for over eight centuries for the prophecy of taking over Constantinople be fulfilled. It was a dear dream that passed through the minds of many leaders and conquerors. The passing of days and years did not fade it off. It remained a target that encouraged to be fulfilled so the one who fulfills it would deserve the praise and complement of the messenger (PPBU) when he said: {Constantinople will be opened (meaning taken over by Muslims), what a wonderful prince its prince, and what a wonderful army is that army}.

The serious attempt to take over Constantinople started during the era of Ma3awiah ben Aby-Sufian who sent two military campaigns in the years 49 and 54 of Hijra (666ac and 671ac). For seven years of continuous military operations but could not take over the city.

Suliman Abd-al-Malik initiated another military campaign in the year 99 Hijra (719 ac) for which he used his best solders and nights with the latest up-to-date military technology. Still the brave and fortified city remained defiant.

More attempts were made at the city of Constantinople during the Ottoman's eras: Sultan Bazeed the first, and Sultan Murad 2nd. Eventually, it was Allah's well that the victory and the take over of the city be through the sultan, Muhammed 2nd the son of the Murad 2nd.

Muhammed the Conquerer (Al Fatih)

Sultan Muhammed the conquer (known as Al-Fatih) on the 27th of Rajab in the year 835 Hejri or 30 March 1432 ac. The sun of the 7th sultan of the Ottoman's empire. He concentrated on educating him. He learned the Quran, learned the Hadeeth, learned Islamic law, mathematics and astronomy. He was trained for the art of war. He also spoke Arabic, Persian, Latin and Greek. He took part in all the wars and battles. Muhammed came to power as a Sultan after the death of his father on the 5th Muharram 855 Hejri or in 1451 ac. He was 22 years old then.

The building of the castle “Romelly Hisar”

Sultan Ba-yazeed 1st created a fortress on the asian banks of the Bosphorus straights during his blockade of Constantinople known as the Anatolian castle. It was built on the narrowest point of the Bosphor straights. Sultan Mohammad decided to build another fortress on the European side of the Bosphur facing the walls of Constantinople. He brought in all the building material and thousands of workers. He himself and men in his government took part in the actual building operation. The emperor of Constantinople could see the building coming up but could not stop it. It took three months to complete the castle with catapult (slingshot like) cannons aiming at the roman supply ship passing through braking the blockade. This castle is known by the name “Romelly Hisar” meaning the castle of the Romans.

The Byzantine emperor made numerous raids on the castle and the workers. The raids developed into skirmishes, and eventually the ottoman Sultan declared war on the Byzantine state. Both sides started getting ready for war. A military leader known as John Gestiiany with 700 strong fighters made it through the blockade to Constantinople, fully loaded with supplies and ammunition. Who helped into organizing, training and redistributed the local army. Giant chains were put into the water to block the Muslim boats and chip getting into the bay. The chains were put across the two points known as the Golden horn.

Muhammed 2nd, was possessed with conquering Constantinople. An Austerian engineer offered to build a giant cannon gun that can huge masses enough to break the fortified walls of Constantinople. It took three months and 700 ton cannon was build capable of launching 5 ton projectiles. The cannon required 100 bulls to pull, and 100 men to operate. It was effective in targeting all roads to Constantinople.

Sultan Mohammad II army arrived on 12th Ramadan 805 (April 1453 ac) and set its control center at the Romanious door of the city. He prayed to Allah with the entire army and the official blockade started. The ottoman fleet of 350 ship moved from the Gallipole sea base to the Bosphur and implemented a sea blockade of the city. A total of 265,000 men at sea and land blockaded the city. A request to surrender was issued to the Byzantine emperor with guarantees given to safe guard the lives and property and religious belief of the inhabitants. The request was refused. For the city has one of the strongest natural and man built fortifications known through history.

The Islamic army kept on bounding the walls, and the navy kept on trying to remove the chains. But, damaged walls were rebuilt, and the Bynzntine and Italian navy kept the Ottoman navy from removing the chains. Supplies sent by the Pop in five large ships engaged with the Ottoman's navy and managed to go through due to their experience in the navy maneuvers.

Sultan Muhammad II got the idea of going round the chains in the water protecting the city from the Muslim navy. The idea was to transport the navy fleet on land round the chains into the bay. The engineers put the plans and workers started the work under the darkness of the night. Roads were laid, covered with timber, covered with grease. And in one night the Ottomans were able to transport 70 ship with their sails down, pulled by mules and tough men, while the cannon guns were hitting the walls to distract the enemy from the ship movement on land. That was on the night of Ramadan 29th in the year 805 H, (1453ac). At dawn the sails were lifted and the drums sounded. A bridge was built inside the harbor to mount more cannon guns. Numerous attempts were made to penetrate the walls.

At dawn on the Tuesday 20 of Jumada Al-Aula 587 H, started his final assault on the city by land and sea. Gestiniary the military leader was badly injured and retreated. Eventually, Muslim soldiers managed to get over the walls, and the ottoman navy managed to remove the chains, the rest of the fleet joined the battle. The Islamic army flowed into the city and defenders escaped. It only took three hours from the start of the assault to secure the entire city.

When Muhammed Al-Fateh as became known got off his horse, prayed to Allah thanking him. Went to Aya-Sofiya church where all the priests and many people took refuge to. He gave them the pardon and the promise for their safety. He ordered the church to be turned into a mosque. And ordered to build a mosque at the grave of the Abi-Ayuoob Al-Ansari who was part of the first attempts to conquer the city. Mohammad Al-Fatih decided to have Constantinople as the capital of the state and changed its name to "Islam pole" meaning the "state of Islam", which later became to be known as Istanbul. He permitted those inhabitants who left during the blockade and war to return. He guaranteed them freedom of religious practice. Istanbul remained the capital of the state until the collapse of the Ottoman empire in the year 1924 ac, and the new state of Turkey was established with Anqera as its capital.